

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

EB-07 COME-00 TRSE-00 /068 W

----- 007282

R 051320Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6773

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 5631

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SY, KU

SUBJ: SYRIAN FONMIN'S VISIT TO KUWAIT

REF: (A) MANAMA 2000, (B) KUWAIT 4265, (C) DAMASCUS 7062.

1. SYRIAN FONMIN KHADDAM'S VISIT TO KUWAIT NOV 28-29 RECEIVED LITTLE ATTENTION HERE, IN WAKE OF GULF FONMINS CONFERENCE AND MORE UNUSUAL VISIT OF IRANIAN FONMIN THE DAY BEFORE. BOTH KHADDAM AND THE GOK WERE CLOSE MOUTHED WITH THE PRESS ABOUT THE VISIT, AND THE KUWAITIS WERE ALSO CLOSED MOUTHER WITH US. ACTING PRIMIN JABER AL ALI'S REMARKS TO CHARGE DURING HOIDAY COURTESY CALL, WERE ELLIPTICAL BUT SEEMED TO SAY THAT KHADDAM WAS HERE SEEKING FUNDS.

2. WE WERE ALSO INTRIGUED BY THE ASSERTION OF THE JORANIAN AMBASSADOR TO BAHRAIN (REPORTED REF A) THAT SYRIAN IS "ANGRY" WITH KUWAIT OVER A PAST DUE FINANCIAL OBLIGATION TO SYRIA. THIS MAY WELL REFER TO HOLD UP IN KUWAITI DISBURSEMENT OF RABAT SUMMIT PAYMENTS, WHICH KUWAITI PARLIMENT AUTHORIZED IN JANUARY 1975 AT A RATE OF \$415 MILLION TO ALL CONFRONTATION  
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STATES OF WHICH WE UNDERSTAND \$180 MILLION WAS FOR SYRIA.

WE UNDERSTAND KUWAIT MADE ITS RABAT PAYMENT TO SYRIA IN 1975 BUT WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE THAT IT HAS DONE SO THIS YEAR. SYRIA COULD ALSO BE UNHAPPY THAT AT LEAST A SCALED DOWN VERSION OF \$3.5 BILLION LOAN REPORTED BY PRESS TO HAVE BEEN PROPOSED FOR SYRIA IN KUWAIT NATION ASSEMBLY HAS NOT BEEN APPROVED. (\$3.5 BILLION FIGURE IS OBVIOUSLY PRESS EXAGGERATION, SINCE TOTAL KUWAIT AID TO ALL ARAB COUNTRIES HAS BEEN RUNNING AT AROUND \$1.5 BILLION PER YEAR OR LESS.)

3. COMMENT: WHILE KUWAIT'S OBLIGATION TO PROVIDE LOAN TO SYRIA IS DUBIOUS, RABAT SUMMIT OBLIGATIONS, WHICH IS IN PUBLIC DOMAIN, IS NOT. WE PRESUME THAT GOK HAS BEEN RELUCTANT TO MOVE AHEAD ON THIS UNTIL THE SITUATION IN LEBANON HAS COMPLETELY STABILIZED FOR REASONS OF KUWAITI/PALESTINIAN RELATIONS. THUS, IN KUWAIT, KHADDAM MAY HAVE BEEN BOTH UNDERLINING THE DEGREE OF STABILITY ACHIEVED IN LEBANON AND EMPHASIZING THE COST TO SYRIA OF SUCH STABILITY, IN ORDER TO CONVINCE THE GOK TO EXPEDITE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE. PRESS REPORTS OF THE VISIT DID INDICATE THAT LEBANON WAS THE MAIN TOPIC DISCUSSED DURING KHADDAM VISIT.

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